

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MAY 12, 2019

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY! THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Thursday, May 16th at 6:30 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let George Demake know if you are unable to attend.

PITAS AND PASTRIES are available for purchase! Talk to **Betty Anderson** or **Chris Toda.**

The latest issue of the Archdiocesan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. **Pick one up and take it home!**

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9AM to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola. Our next Saturday is June 1st.

LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES in our Parish. If you know of a soon-to-be graduate, please inform Fr. Nick or

GREETERS TEAM 1:
MACLYNN AND DIMITRI SAFFRON

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 6:1-7
GOSPEL: MARK 15:43-16:8

TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

Tim Rucho

MEMORIAL DAY is Monday, May 27th. Fr. Nick will be at Hope Cemetery from 10:00 am. The common Memorial Service will be at noon at the Altar in Hope. If you would like Fr. Nick to visit a grave in another cemetery, please contact him to make arrangements: 508-845-0088.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING is **Saturday, June 1st from 9 am to 2 pm.** Gerry Belba is coordinating, and we need about 3 people to help with traffic and coordination.

Please contact him:
vgbelba@msn.com.

ALBANIAN FESTIVAL 2019 will be held the weekend of May 31-June 2. Keep the dates open.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Sandra and Nicholas Mazanitis.**

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

THE APRIL ISSUE of the *Holy Trinity Times* is available for download. Click the link to view April Newsletter. And don't forget to 'like' Holy Trinity on Facebook and Twitter!

SAVE THE DATE for Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center **25th Anniversary Dinner Dance Celebration on Saturday, August 24, 2019** at St. George Cathedral Anna St., Worcester.

Mother's Day Tea Social with Entertainment on Sunday May 12th at 2:00PM.

HOLY TRINITY is a non-profit skilled nursing and rehabilitation center and a project of the Council of Orthodox Churches of Central MA. Please keep Holy Trinity in your prayers and in your charitable plans. Contribu-

DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs, May 16	Parish Council Meeting, 6:30PM
Mon, May 27	Memorial Day, NOON at Hope Cemetery
May 31-June 2	Albanian Festival
Sat, June 1	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON e-Recycling
Thurs, June 6	ASCENSION
Sat, June 15	Saturday of Souls, Liturgy, 10:00AM
Sun, June 16	PENTECOST
Fri, June 21	Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00PM
Mon, June 24	Apostles Fast Begins

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

tions to the Treasured Generations Annual Fund can be made at www.htnr.net and volunteers are welcome to be a part of Holy Trinity by contacting: **Dana Spinney**, Activities Director, at 508-852-1000 or e-mail: dspinney@htnr.net

NAMEDAYS

May 1

St. Isidora of Egypt

Sydney Ellen Mountzouris

The Holy Prophet Jeremiah

Jeromy Grniet

May 5

The Great Martyr Irene of Thessalonica

Irene Mountzouris

Irene Tsoules

May 21

The Holy Equals to the Apostles Constantine and Helen

Rev. Fr. Dean Paleologos

Constantine Apostol

Elaine Apostola

Konstantin Charalambides

Presvytera Eleni Christakos

Amalia Helene Collins

Hannah Constance Datz

Dina Entwistle

Lana Eleni Ermilio

Iliana Victoria Fahey

Eileen Favata

Elena Galeriu

Ileana A Nace

Constanta Papit

Eleni Polymeros

Elena Prelipcean

Elaine Rocheford

Dina K. Salerno

Eleanor Sedares

Elaine Tanacea

Dean Valoras

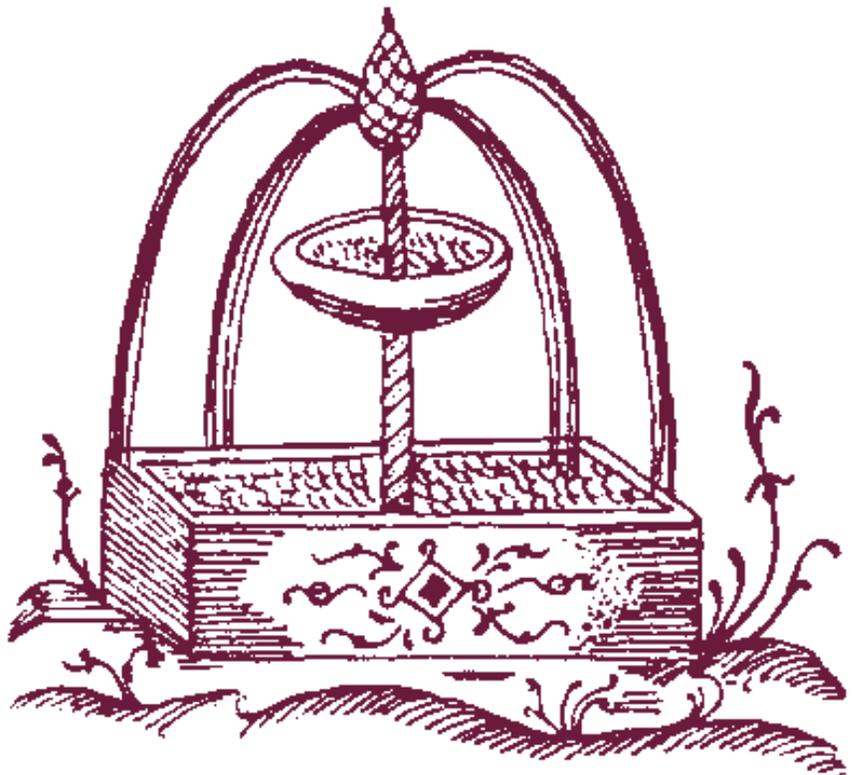
GREETERS/USHERS AND COFFEE HOUR TEAMS SOUGHT

Parishioners are needed to assist with greeting and ushering. There is a sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board, or you can talk to **Chris Seith**: 978-257-2765 or email: cbseith@gmail.com.

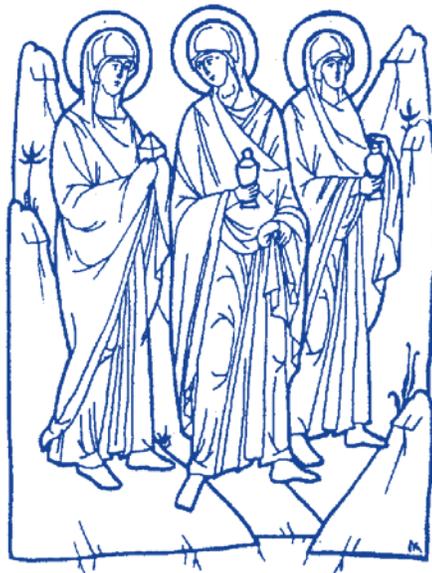
What does the job require? You should try to be at the church 15 min prior to the start of the service. General duties are to assist at the candle stand (stock the candles, monitor the lit candles and extinguish the short ones, make change), assist or direct parishioners and visitors with seating, and anything else that may be related to the particular service. Greeters should also make sure that any donations and the like are collected, accounted for, and given to the treasurer. Greeters should also be sure that the candle stand is left in a neat and clean condition, that candles are restocked and as the sand is cleaned/neatened for the next service. If there are any issues, the Parish Council members can assist.

Coffee Hour Teams are also being reestablished. We're looking to set up 4 to 5 teams to assist with Coffee Hour set-up and clean-up. **Chris Seith** is also in charge of this. Please contact him.

Whether Greeter or Coffee Crew, the idea is that it would be at most a once-a-month commitment. This is a great opportunity to contribute to the warm community our St. Nicholas parish is.



THE MYRRHBEARERS



A NOTE OF THANKS ...

We want to thank the members of our Parish who helped especially through this Paschal season: those who planned and prepared the wonderful food from the first Lenten meal, to the Palm Sunday Luncheon through the Paschal Agape Meal; the ushers, the altar servers; those who set-up and cleaned the facility; the baking crew, who produced pitas and pastries that brightened the holiday tables throughout the region; the religious education instructors and those who coordinated the Great Friday children's retreat; our chanters: Tim Rucho and George Demake. There are so many who always help and contribute in ways small and large. Take a moment next time you see an act of kindness and service and personally thank the individual.

Christ is Risen!

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN

About the beginning of His thirty-second year, when the Lord Jesus was going throughout Galilee, preaching and working miracles, many women who had received of His beneficence left their own homeland and from then on followed after Him. They ministered unto Him out of their own possessions, even until His crucifixion and entombment; and afterwards, neither losing faith in Him after His death, nor fearing the wrath of the Jewish rulers, they came to the sepulchre, bearing the myrrh-oils they had prepared to anoint His body. It is because of the myrrh-oils, that these God-loving women brought to the tomb of Jesus that they are called the Myrrh-bearers. Of those whose names are known are the following: first of all, the most holy Virgin Mary, who in Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 is called "the mother of James and Joses" (these are the sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, and she was therefore their step-mother); Mary Magdalene (celebrated July 22); Mary, the wife of Clopas; Joanna, wife of Chouza, a steward of Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and Susanna. As for the names of the rest of them, the evangelists have kept silence (Matthew 27:55-56; 28:1-10. Mark 15:40-41. Luke 8:1-3; 23:55-24:11, 22-24. John 19:25; 20:11-18. Acts 1:14).

Together with them we celebrate also the secret disciples of the Saviour, Joseph and Nicodemus. Of these, Nicodemus was probably a Jerusalemite, a prominent leader among the Jews and of the order of the Pharisees, learned in the Law and instructed in the Holy Scriptures. He had believed in Christ when, at the beginning of our

Saviour's preaching of salvation, he came to Him by night. Furthermore, he brought some one hundred pounds of myrrh-oils and an aromatic mixture of aloes and spices out of reverence and love for the divine Teacher (John 19:39). Joseph, who was from the city of Arimathea, was a wealthy and noble man, and one of the counselors who were in Jerusalem. He went boldly unto Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and together with Nicodemus he gave Him burial. Since time did not permit the preparation of another tomb, he placed the Lord's body in his own tomb which was hewn out of rock, as the Evangelist says (Matthew 27:60).

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O GOD OUR FATHER: As a new day is born and the light of early morning fills the world, we come before you once again, ready to anoint your Son with our praises as once the myrrhbearing women hoped to anoint him with their precious herbs and spices. Through your Christ, the great saviour of all creation, enable us ever to be mindful of the wondrous things you have done for us, that we may bring forth fruit worthy of your benevolence. Teach us how to hold fast to these mysteries we celebrate, and make us fit to join all your saints at the table of the eternal banquet.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE WOMEN DISCIPLES

LAST WEEK we remembered the witness of Thomas to the Lord's rising. This week we remember the witness of the Lord's women disciples, as well as that of Joseph of Aramathea and Nikodimos. These were the people who saw him die and then buried him. In the case of the women, they were the first ones to whom he appeared after he rose from the dead. In last week's reflection when I quoted St. Paul I noted that he had not mentioned the women's witness because he was making a "legal" argument. Holy Tradition, as reflected in both the Gospel accounts and in the hymnography, does not have this reticence. The faithfulness and courage of the women are featured prominently. We hear of it in the Matins hymns sung every Sunday morning.

Also, this Sunday is Mother's Day. I always find it a happy coincidence when the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers falls together with Mother's Day. It reminds us that many of these women were also mothers. It also reminds us that for most of us it was the women in our lives — mothers, grandmothers, and aunts — who guided us in our faith during our formative years. Without being overly sentimental about it, we should acknowledge the power of their witness.

The truth is that from the Church's beginning women have been among the primary teachers of the faith, to their children and others. We remember great men theologians for the sophistication and depth of their writings, but whom do they remember? In his funeral oration for his sister St. Macrina, St. Gregory of Nyssa credits her for teaching him and his brother St. Basil the Great, as well as the rest of their siblings, everything they knew about the faith. In his mind, she was the greatest theologian among them.

There were the many women whom the Church calls "Equal to the Apostles," such as Mary Magdalene, Nina, Enlightener of Georgia and Helen, the Emperor

Constantine's mother. Each of these, and many others, were strong and indomitable. They are models for all of us to emulate.

Then there is Mary, our Lord's mother. I didn't begin with her example because she is so often lifted up as the supreme model of both motherhood and virginity that I oftentimes feel she has become a cliché in many people's minds. Like all of these other women she was and is not only a paragon of tenderness, but also of strength and courage. As a way to visualize this, look at the way our Orthodox tradition has chosen to depict her. Unlike the Madonna art forms in the west, Orthodox iconography does not romanticize her. There are no rosy cheeks, no full-figured motherliness. Rather she is portrayed as a person of strength and resolve, even as she is a mother of tenderness and compassion.

While we have many references to Mary in the Gospels, perhaps none is so powerful as the Lord's words from the Cross. Seeing his mother below, weeping, he asks his beloved disciple John to look after her (cf. John 19:26-27). He would not leave this existence without ensuring for her care. Also, we know from Holy Tradition that the first person he appeared to after the Resurrection was his mother. There is perhaps no more powerful sign of our Lord's humanity than his love and devotion for his mother. Moreover, she is not only his mother, but through him, she becomes mother to us all.

A window into the way the Church has viewed this relationship between Jesus and his mother can be found in the Lamentations sung at the Lord's tomb during Great Saturday Matins (Great Friday evening). These hymns attached to the verses of Psalm 119 put poetry to the words spoken by Mary while she is holding her dead Son, and the words of comfort he offers her in return. No one who can imagine what it would

be like to hold the body of their dead child can remain unmoved.

The final observation I would like to offer relates to the movement within certain elements of conservative Christianity regarding the place of women, and especially wives, toward men and their husbands. Without even attempting to be diplomatic, let me say there is nothing further from the heart of Christ's Gospel than the notion that women are of a different "order" than men. This movement is more akin to the Taliban's idea of the place of women. Christianity has opposed all theories of class, all support for slavery, all notions of gender inequality or any other intrinsic division of humanity into lower and higher castes (cf. Galatians 3:28). We are all equal in Christ.

Having said this, God did create us male and female (Genesis 1:27). We should reflect on why God would create polarities within our one humanity, making the procreation of our kind dependent upon the loving cooperation of women and men. Without making too much of gender differences, it is equally hard to ignore them. Men and women often have a particular take on the same issue. Usually we don't find this out until this different "take" erupts in one way or another, funneling us (hopefully) toward a happy resolution.

Our mothers are different from our fathers. Motherhood and Fatherhood are not a matter of function (i.e., the services each provides), but states of being, extensions of our gendered personhood. Children always know who is mother and who is father. They don't need a script. They also know when one or the other is missing-in-action.

So, let us give thanks to God for our mothers. We'll hold off giving thanks for our fathers until June.

Christ is Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA